

Miners From Wales And Ireland Settled Here; Start Of Gravity Road; A City Is Incorporated

Rashleigh History—Head to come an engine at a head-house, chains

The News today presents the second installment of Miss Alice Voyle Rashleigh's historical sketch of the city of Carbondale. In it she tells of "The Gravity", the "Steam Road" and the growth of the Delaware and Hudson railroad to its present position of eminence among the Class 1 carriers of the United States.

She tells how coal was sent to market in the early days of the anthracite industry, and of the developments which led to the incorporation of the city, first in the region to obtain a municipal charter.

Tomorrow The News will publish another portion of Miss Rashleigh's interesting narrative. And now for today's installment:

Miners came from Wales and Ireland. The Welsh settled in the southern part of the town known as Welsh Hill. The Irish miners built shanties on the western side which for many years was called Shanty Hill.

The great question was "how to get the coal to market". There was only a bridle path along the river and the first road leading to the Milford, Owego Turnpike, was laid out December 21, 1828. Then the dream came true and the Gravity Road over the Moosic mountains to Honesdale, was completed in 1829.

Thus the "first communication" with the outside world was established. This Gravity road was a series of inclined planes operated by

being attached to the "trip". Often the chain broke, letting the cars go back down the plane. This was called a runaway. This difficulty was eventually overcome and the ride over the Gravity became our greatest joy with its 28 planes, its 10 mile level, its "Shepherd's Crook", a curve having a radius of only 100 feet, all giving 57 miles of picturesque scenery. Plane "19" was 2680 feet long and the steepest plane was the first out of Honesdale. "Shepherd's Crook" was surveyed and planned by O. D. Shepherd, a civil engineer of this vicinity. In October, 1898, all this was abandoned, and most of it was changed into a wide gauge road. I was fortunate in having one ride over it and it seemed very strange to have an engine pulling the cars, where before they carried on by gravitation and a wonderful system of silent signals.

At the head of North Main street is the old stone shop, but the old white horse has passed into history.

In the early days, small quantities of coal were taken by team to Lackawaxen, and from there it was floated down the Delaware to Philadelphia where they found competition with the Lehigh coal so they turned their attention to a New York market and the D. and H. Canal from Rondout to Honesdale was completed in 1828.

The first carload of coal was shipped over the Moosic Mountains October 9, 1829 to Honesdale. Then by canal to Rondout, and on down to the New York market. The Gravity road was extended to Olyphant and the company later built a one track road through the Lackawanna Valley and extended it to Wilkes-Barre. Many improvements have been made and they now have the right of way to Montreal. The D. & H. holds its place among the "big railroads" of the United States.

When C. R. Manville was superintendent of the D. & H. a common expression was, "Time and the D. & H. wait for no man!"

With all these happenings, the town grew and prospered, but there were floods and disastrous fires and business kept moving up town. In 1840, 252 persons were engaged in mining and 32 in agriculture and the population in the village and township was 2398. The need

of more efficient government was evident as many kinds of business were established. In the years preceding 1851 law cases had to be taken to Wilkes-Barre. This was most inconvenient and it became the consensus of opinion that something should be done to further the progress of the village. After the first great fire, it was decided that the village should have a separate city government. S. S. Benedict, representative, at Harrisburg, used his influence and secured by "Special Act of Legislature", a "charter", making Carbondale a city. Even though there were less than 5000 inhabitants. Success was attained, when on March 15, 1851, Gov. William Johnston signed on the dotted line and the organization of the city of Carbondale began.

P. C. Gritman laid out the original city lines under difficulty. He started on New Year's Day with chain boys. The snow was knee deep but they persevered and went entirely around the city before the holiday closed. He charged 15 dollars for the work.

The first annual election gave us Mayor James Archbald, with a Select and Common Council, two constables, aldermen for four wards, a prosecuting attorney, two poormasters, three auditors, one of whom was Thomas Voyle, my grandfather, who was also mayor three times—(1867-68-72). James Stott and W. H. Richmond were the other two auditors. There was a clerk of Mayor's Court, and assessor and Lewis Pughe as treasurer.